



Predator Management in Utah

Without management, predators can limit the growth of other wildlife populations.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) recognizes the need to efficiently and effectively manage predators. Predator management is a legitimate wildlife-management tool that must be available to DWR personnel when needed. The DWR also recognizes that predator management can be controversial.



The DWR is working to limit the impact of cougars and coyotes on Utah's deer herds.



Coyotes are territorial animals that live in areas across Utah. They primarily prey on small mammals but have an opportunistic, adaptable diet.

When does the DWR manage predators?

If predator populations are limiting the DWR's ability to reach other wildlife-management objectives, wildlife officials may choose to implement predator-management plans. Those plans provide a detailed explanation of when, where and how predator-control efforts may occur.

For which species does the DWR have predator-management plans?

The DWR currently has predator management plans for the following species:

- Ravens, coyotes and red foxes that prey on sage grouse
- Raccoons and red foxes that prey on nesting waterfowl
- Cougars that prey on adult doe mule deer and bighorn sheep
- Coyotes that prey on mule deer fawns and pronghorn fawns

Of these programs, the one that targets coyotes is the largest and most costly for the DWR.

Why are coyotes a problem?

In many studies—conducted in Utah and elsewhere—coyotes have been identified as a significant threat to deer fawn survival. As a result, the DWR maintains an extremely aggressive coyote-management policy. Wildlife personnel focus on efficiently removing coyotes in areas where fawn-to-doe ratios are a concern.

How much does Utah spend on coyote removal?

From 2007–2010, the DWR transferred \$2.146 million dollars (an average of \$536,375 per year) to the Utah Department of Agriculture for coyote management. In FY 2011, the amount was increased to \$583,400. In FY 2012, that amount will increase again to \$684,600. Most of the money is used by the Department of Agriculture to fund state and USDA-Wildlife Services trappers, aerial hunters and sharpshooters. They execute predator management plans and target coyotes in the right areas, at the right time of the year.

Why are biologists directing removal efforts?

Science shows that the targeted use of predator control can be beneficial, but if done haphazardly, it can become an inefficient use of limited resources. The DWR uses the best available scientific data in deciding when and where to use predator management (as detailed in the predator-management plans).

Appropriately targeting and timing predator-removal efforts is essential in reducing the impact that coyotes have on deer fawn survival. In Utah, wildlife professionals typically remove coyotes from deer-fawning grounds and during the coyote breeding season (usually February and March).

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